



## *State of Wyoming Military Department Office of the Adjutant General*

*5500 Bishop Boulevard  
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009-3320  
<http://www.wy.ngb.army.mil>*

**Sep. 14, 2005**

### **For immediate release**

#### **Media contact:**

Deidre Forster (307) 772-5253; cell (307) 631-4153; email [deidre.forster@wy.ngb.army.mil](mailto:deidre.forster@wy.ngb.army.mil).  
Master Sgt. Trudy Woodcock, (307) 772-5229; email [trudy.woodcock@wy.ngb.army.mil](mailto:trudy.woodcock@wy.ngb.army.mil).  
Staff Sgt. Tim Marquez, (307) 772-5040; email [tim.marquez@wy.ngb.army.mil](mailto:tim.marquez@wy.ngb.army.mil).

**WyMD-05-70**

## **Wyoming National Guard responds to Hurricane Katrina**

CHEYENNE – When the call to assist came, the Wyoming National Guard cowboyed up, and headed out to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Currently, the Wyoming National Guard has more than 40 personnel deployed to Louisiana and Mississippi to assist victims and relief workers during Hurricane Katrina recovery operations.

Initially Wyoming responded with 73 Soldiers and Airmen, two C-130s and four UH-60s, aeromedical evacuation supplies and mobile kitchens. Completed missions have brought 30 people and the two C-130s back to Cheyenne.

During the week they were deployed, the two C-130 crews flew 61 hours, transported 233 people and moved more than 51 tons of cargo. Most of the people transported were cared for by the 187th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.

"We moved out 250 people in the three days we were there," said Tech. Sgt. Mike Tarbuck, a medical technician with the squadron. "Using our C-130s and other airlift, our squadron transported 10 percent of the 2,500 evacuees."

Tarbuck and 14 other squadron members were tasked to transport patients on C-130s from New Orleans to safe havens in Arkansas, Georgia, Texas and Louisiana a few days after Katrina blew through the area.

"This was my first mission as an aerovac crew member and it was exciting for me," said the 12-year military veteran. "But then the realization hits when you see a patient get on the plane with a plastic bag and you know that's all they have in the world."

"We are proud to have Wyoming Soldiers and Airmen among the more than 48,000 National Guard personnel from every state and territory assisting victims of this tragedy," said Maj. Gen. Ed Wright, Wyoming's adjutant general.

Currently more than 30,000 National Guard personnel are operating in Louisiana. Among them are 19 members of the Wyoming Army National Guard and 12 members of the 153rd Security Forces Squadron.

The 19 Wyoming Army National Guard Soldiers and four UH-60 helicopters are stationed at New Orleans Naval Air Station. Since arriving on Sept. 3, they have flown more than 160 hours transporting search and rescue personnel, and performing hoist rescues of hurricane victims. In the first 24 hours alone, two helicopters rescued 20 people.

"The Army Guard team encountered an initial chaotic scene when we arrived," said Lt. Col. Scott Schofield, Wyoming Army National Guard state aviation officer and officer in charge of the deployed Wyoming Soldiers. "The operation has transformed into a professional military endeavor, supported by Army aviation from several states and territories and the humble 'can-do' attitude of our Wyoming Soldiers."

The 12 members of the Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Security Forces Squadron currently are stationed at the River Center in Baton Rouge, La., protecting displaced residents there and at other locations.

Master Sgt. Doug Rhodes, noncommissioned officer in charge of the security personnel in Louisiana, said the unit members' morale remains high given the tragedy around them.

"When you work so closely with these people it is hard to accept the fact they have nothing left except for a few bags of clothing they might have brought along. I think one of the hardest facts is that at the end of my deployment I will be returning to my house in Cheyenne while thousands have nowhere to go," he said.

The unit is also providing convoy security between Baton Rouge and New Orleans.

In Mississippi, Wyoming Air National Guard Airmen are feeding military members and relief workers from a staging area in Gulfport. Twelve members of the 153rd Services Flight arrived in Gulfport on Sept. 3 and, with 120 other services personnel, immediately began the overwhelming task of feeding and housing more than 3,500 people located at a base built to house 900.

Chief Master Sgt. Rob Coughenour, 153rd Services Flight chief, said the group of Air National Guard and Army personnel has served more than 87,000 meals, set up three tent cities and are working 16-hour shifts to support all the operations. "Everyone is blending together well to get the job done," he said. "This is a huge, monstrous operation."

The Wyoming National Guard's hurricane response effort has entailed more than deploying its own people. The 153rd Aerial Port Flight, whose mission is to prepare and load military aircraft, has loaded more than 168,090 pounds of cargo and 97 active duty and national guard personnel on C-130's, C-17's and KC-135's from Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Wyoming and other states.

—30—

Cutline info: A Wyoming Army National Guard UH-60 flies in front of the New Orleans superdome while completing a mission during Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. Photo taken by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Scott Woodcock